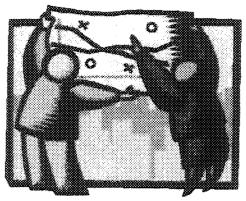
Chapter 1: Building the Coalition



This chapter provides steps for building a solid coalition structure.

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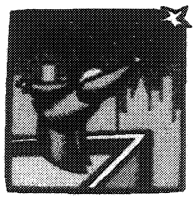
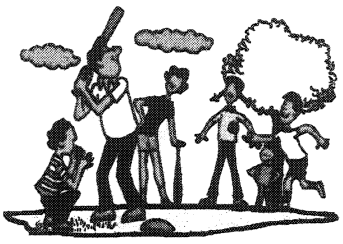


Chapter 1 *Building the Coalition*

Module 1: Getting Started

Step Up and Step Out to build a coalition for success!

There are few things more important than making sure our kids lead happy, healthy lives. **Step Up and Step Out** can make that possible. The degree of success is dependent on the coalition each community develops. This chapter will give you a start on doing that!



What is a coalition and how is it formed?

The word coalition sounds a little complex, but it is exactly whatever your community wants to make it. Coalitions are about people coming together for a common purpose.

Description of a coalition

"A joining of individuals, groups, and businesses with a shared goal of creating changes together that would be impossible independently."

How coalitions take shape

- Coalitions start with a thought, an idea of wanting a change, or improvement.
- Coalitions progress when people come together to define a purpose and mission.
- Coalitions start to take form when people begin looking at opportunities for change.
- Coalitions make a difference when actions are taken.

How do coalitions for kids' health look?

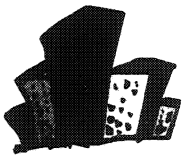
Every coalition for kids' health looks different. Coalitions are just as unique as the communities in which they are formed. Communities are the "big picture" and how your coalition fits into this picture varies with the things that make your community unique...the resources, people, and goals!

When the paint dries, the picture your coalition has painted will be the picture that fits the health needs of kids in your community.

It may be easier to understand potential differences if you compare Commuterville, USA with Urban Town, USA.

Commuterville, USA: Population 4000

Businesses: Bank, Post Office, 1 Grocery Store, 2 Restaurants, 2 Childcare Centers, 4 Churches, 1 Long-term Care Facility, 2 Gas Stations, 1 Hardware Store, 2 Gift Shops, 1 Physician, 1 Chiropractor, 1 Hairdresser
Schools: 1 each Elementary, Middle School, and High School
Recreation Facilities: none



Urban Town, USA: Population 60,000

Businesses: Multiple businesses in all areas, including 2 industries, which employ more than 500 people each
Schools: Multiple schools of each grade level
Recreation Facilities: Bowling Alley, City Recreation Department

Residents in Commuterville work in other cities, so many are not available during the day. A limited number of businesses and a lack of recreation facilities create one set of opportunities for Commuterville. Urban Town on the other hand, has many businesses and an existing recreation facility, so it is very likely their goals will look much different.

Common qualities of successful coalitions

Although all coalitions look different, common factors for a strong coalition have been identified.

Successful coalitions will:

- Know what they want to change or achieve
- Market and recruit to organize a committed group of community members
- Go through a community review, or evaluation process, to determine wants, needs, resources and problems that limit change
- Model, or practice in daily life, the changes they wish to create

Your first question at this point is probably:
How do you build a coalition that incorporates all of the above factors?

The answer is:
There are probably several different ways that a coalition can be built, but this chapter gives you steps that when taken, can lead to great success!

Taking the first steps to coalition building

There are two steps that your core group of organizers needs to take at the same time. **Both are very important!**

- **Create a community awareness of reasons and plans for coalition building**
- **Recruit coalition members**

Step Up and Step Out to create community awareness!

This **very important step** is taken *before, during and beyond* the coalition building process. People need to know what you are doing, but also become aware of the issues that prompt your actions.

Developing a marketing plan based on coalition goals will come later, but for now, you need to plan a series of actions to create ***interest and excitement*** in the coalition and initiative!

There are many small awareness-building steps you can take at this point that won't require much time or resources, if you plan wisely. Involving ***everyone*** in your coalition's core-planning group ***now*** is important. It will allow you to spread the work around, and to create ownership of the building process!

Awareness tools

- Word of mouth
- Media
- School and community events or activities
- Business involvement

Examples of media use:

- Newspaper or newsletter articles; posters on public bulletin boards
- Information in physician's waiting rooms
- Public service radio announcements

Examples of school events or activities:

- Healthy cooking or recipe contest, such as a Chili Cook-off
- School sponsored "Fruit and Vegetable Play"
- A special meal in the school cafeteria
- A "Happy Birthday to **Step Up and Step Out**" day at school
- Announcements or skits at Parent-Teacher Organization meetings

Examples of community events or activities:

- Enactment of a healthy eating and/or physical activity story by kids at the community Fall/Spring festival
- Community health fair
- Community "games" or "Health Walk"
- A contest to create a special name for your coalition's initiative
- A short "skit" during half-time of a football or basketball game—or leading everyone in a "**Step Up and Step Out** Wave" and introduce the concept of increasing opportunities for physical activity

Examples of business involvement:

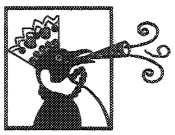
- Post fruit and vegetable artwork created by students in the local supermarket
- Have merchants and schools welcome your initiative on their signs

Try for a minimum of two to four "awareness actions" per month for the first six months of coalition building. Be creative, but don't "overspend" time or other resources!

Now you are ready to begin inviting community members to join the coalition!

Step Up and Step Out to recruit coalition members!

Come to the Coalition Meeting at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday



Most of us have planned a party at one time or another and worried whether or not anyone would show up. Just as everyone looks forward to a good turnout for a party, your coalition *wants* good community representation. The tool for making sure of good participation is recruitment! It is a skill your coalition will want to develop every step of the way.

In the beginning you will want to recruit people to just get the coalition started. Later you will be recruiting for help with specific activities. Always, you will be looking for new members to replace those who have moved on or to generate new ideas, approaches, and resources. Recruiting isn't an overwhelming task if it becomes a matter of habit, rather than one of effort.

Who should be recruited?

The answer to that one is easy—*anyone and everyone*...from the middle school student to the mayor of your town, or the small hometown shop owner to the large corporation president. Of course you'll want to recruit particular groups and individuals for different reasons, but *everyone* has something important to contribute! Keep in mind, ideas and creativity are more diverse when you have a good cross-section of people involved!

There is a tendency in the early stages of coalition building to focus on recruitment of recognized community leaders. You will want to include them because of their position and authority to readily remove obstacles to action. However, relying on them really limits your possibilities. Busy leaders may support the coalition, but may not be able play key roles for taking actions. Less recognized individuals are more likely to become coalition leaders or play other key roles in the coalition.

Coalition terminology: members vs. partners

The words coalition member and partner are sometimes used interchangeably, but there is a distinction.

- **Partner**: An established agency, organization, or business that has interests compatible with the coalition
- **Member:** An individual who shares a personal interest with the coalition.

Partner/member traits

1. **Agencies or organizations with common interests, goals, and resources**

Examples:

The American Heart Association, American Cancer Society, American Diabetes Association, Pork Producers, Beef Council, Wheat Commission, County Extension, State Board of Education, 4-H, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Camp Fire, YMCA/YWCA, physicians, wellness coordinators, and dentists

2. **Direct links for supporting the goals of the coalition**

Examples:

The school board, PTO/PTA presidents, site councils, principals, superintendents, church leaders, community theater programs, day care operators, coaches, gymnastic instructors, and camp directors

3. **Businesses with similar but sometimes conflicting goals**

Examples:

Fast food and other restaurants, food and beverage suppliers, and fund-raisers

4. **Businesses that provide community service**

Examples:

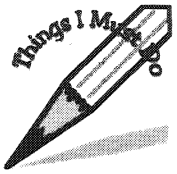
Banks, supermarkets, libraries, police and fire departments, corporations, colleges, universities, athletic teams, newspapers, television stations, radio stations, and bookstores

Recruitment action steps

There are no "rules" about how many people must be recruited, so just have fun! Think of the steps to recruiting coalition members and partners as you would a party:

- **Plan...the first step to excitement**
- **Invite...actively recruit**
- **Make sure everyone is having a good time... sustain participation**

Plan...the first step to excitement

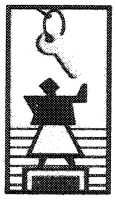


Planning for recruitment, just like anything else, is probably the most difficult part of getting organized. Use the tips provided to guide your plans.

1. **Plan to identify win/win situations**
2. **Identify benefits to members and partners**
3. **Identify reasons individuals may be reluctant to join**
4. **Identify existing partnerships**
5. **Plan different levels of participation**

1. Plan to identify win/win situations!

A "win/win" situation occurs when all parties involved benefit in some manner from the relationship!



Everyone has something to bring to a coalition, but determining how a person's skills, talents, and resources fit the needs of the initiative is the way to identify "wins" (benefits) to the coalition.

Resources that benefit the coalition include:

- Expertise
- Time
- Money
- People
- Role Models
- Media Access
- Products
- Credibility

Sometimes an opportunity is viewed as a resource, including the chance to:

- Institutionalize ideas
- Network
- Test new concepts

Examples –Resources used to create "wins" for the coalition include:

- Media...newspapers, radio/TV stations provide opportunities for communication
- Products...grocery stores provide food samples, field trips
- Products...sporting goods stores provide outlets for physical activity equipment
- Expertise...social service agencies provide nutrition consulting
- Expertise...financial institutions provide help with budgeting, or accounting
- Money...the community-at-large provides donations
- Network...speakers bureaus help promote **Step Up and Step Out**
- People and time...volunteers provide many different things

2. Identify the benefits to members and partners.

People become interested and stay motivated when they gain something for their efforts. Benefits can range from simple to complex, from recognition to monetary gain. Identifying how the partner can benefit as well as the coalition sets up a ***win/win*** situation!

Examples – "*Wins*" for others as a result of partnering with the coalition include:

School wins:

- Establishing healthy habits may lead to improved learning and retention by students
- Teachers, food service and administration can benefit through the exchange of ideas and access to additional resources
- The introduction of new ideas, products and classroom links with school meals may lead to increased school meal participation
- Healthy choices in nutrition and activity may lead to more students/staff, reducing the risk of sick days, and leading to financial gain
- Enhanced interventions for drug, tobacco, and alcohol programs

Business, agencies, or individuals wins:

- Goodwill/image building within the community
- Potential for increased business volume
- Community credibility as a partner/expert
- Potential tax savings, greater financial return

- ♥ Networking
- ♥ Potential to add to customer base
- ♥ Media exposure
- ♥ Enhanced competitive advantage
- ♥ Outlets for product distribution
- ♥ New test markets for products or services
- ♥ A preventive lifestyle that will help decrease health risk factors and may create long-term financial gains for the public/private sectors

3. Identify reasons individuals may be reluctant to join the coalition and then create win/win situations by working out solutions to problems.

Win/win situations cannot be created if perceived threats or conflicts are not identified and addressed. Individuals, organizations, or businesses may have an interest in some of the actions of the coalition, but may be very cautious about becoming involved. Many conflicts can be resolved to create ***win/win*** situations.

Examples:

Example 1: Partner with fast food and other restaurant managers to promote existing healthy menu items. The coalition can help market these offerings with healthy menu symbols, through promotion offers and newspaper/newsletter articles.

Example 2: Partner with food and beverage suppliers to provide healthy choices at concession stands during sports events. The coalition can promote these healthy items and provide feedback to the supplier on community preferences.

Example 3: Partner with school and community fund-raisers that are in competition with school meals or that sell products which send mixed messages. The coalition can help fund-raisers explore options that are not in conflict with its' goals, and ask the public to support them for the positive changes they make.

4. Identify existing partnerships that could be used to create *win/win* situations.

There may be established links that have not been pursued for recruiting. Direct links in a school-based community initiative include the school board, Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) presidents, principals, the superintendent, and teachers.

Examples of *win/win* situations:

Example 1: The coalition can find community volunteers to help with classroom activities for a teacher who participates on the coalition.

Example 2: A school board member can get good community feedback on issues by participating on a coalition.

Example 3: The coalition provides PTO presidents a place to network with community partners. The PTO president can further the goals of the coalition by creating more opportunities for healthy eating and activity choices during programs and events.

5. Identify different levels of participation that allow varying levels of involvement to create win/win situations.

People, agencies, and businesses vary greatly in what they can contribute to the coalition. Successful recruitment depends on identifying different levels of participation. Build in ways everyone can participate, from the person who just wants to be kept informed of coalition activities, to the person who is the coalition's chairperson.

Partners or members are typically one of two types that are distinguished by how visible, or easily recognized they are within the coalition. Terms used to describe two different levels of participation are:

- ***Visible:*** Members and partners who are active in planning and initiating coalition actions
- ***Invisible:*** Members and partners who do not regularly attend coalition meetings but believe in and support the coalition

Visible partners and participation

Visible partners...the number of people who are visible at coalition meetings...is what coalition organizers first seek. It is mistakenly used as an indicator of the coalition's "success."

Examples of visible participation:

- Accepting organizational responsibilities
- "Waving the flag" of the coalition by marketing and becoming a spokesperson
- Looking at the big picture of the initiative to develop action plans
- Actively recruiting new members/partners
- Serving as an "idea person"
- Keeping initiative goals in mind as a team player
- Helping to develop leaders
- Seeking out funding sources
- Remaining a catalyst for action, and helping to implement strategies
- Helping to maintain and sustain the initiative

Invisible partners and participation

Invisible participation only means little visibility. A partner should not be excluded from recruitment just because it looks as though they will not be able to attend coalition meetings. They can still make significant contributions to the coalition. Explore ways to create ***win/win*** situations with partners at each level of participation.

Examples of invisible participation:

- Distributing information for the public
- Modeling desirable behaviors
- Providing incentives for desirable behavior
- Providing physical facilities
- Linking on an "as needed" basis perhaps if temporary support is needed
- Financial support
- Removing obstacles to action

Inviting partners...actively recruiting

Depending on your coalition's structure, recruitment can vary from reaching a person with a single phone call to a major team presentation for a large corporation.

It would be great if everyone played a role in recruiting, but the coalition may prefer to prepare a small group of individuals to be "official" recruiters. These recruiters would know the ins-and-outs of the coalition's plan, be able to identify ***win/win*** situations, and have good marketing skills.

Recruiting Efforts

The initial contact

1. If possible, have someone with an established relationship with the person make the contact. Or you can make the contact, and have the person with the relationship follow-up for support.

2. Have the coalition's interests in mind, e.g., desired partner resources, existing partnerships, win/win situations, existing conflicts, and ideas for different levels of participation.

3. Contact the person and request an appointment to discuss the coalition.

4. Be specific in what you ask.

The recruitment

1. Make your request in person if possible. Depending on the relationship, you may want to have a second person accompany you.

2. Be accurate and thorough in explaining the interests of the coalition so people will have a clear idea of what you are asking them to represent. Leave a small packet of information including the types of assistance needed. If coalition goals have a good fit with their beliefs and values, they are more likely to be involved.

3. Be prepared to discuss coalition expectations in terms of attendance, participation, and commitment. People need to be clear about these expectations once the coalition is established.

4. Of course you won't know coalition structure in the very early stages, but later, people need clarity about organization, i.e., plans for coalition leadership, decision-making, allocation of responsibilities, and approaches to problem solving.

5. Allow those being recruited an opportunity to express their expectations...what they want the coalition to do for them or their group. Taking time to do this allows the recruiter to identify potential ***win/win*** situations.

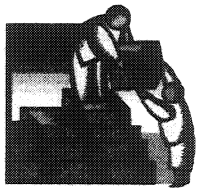
6. Present a ***win/win*** situation for the person or group you want to get involved...how the initiative can help personally or professionally.

7. Be sensitive to people's time. People may hesitate to get involved because of a perceived or a stated time commitment. If visible participation does not look likely, recruit then and there for invisible participation! Accept what people can give, such as help with a one-time event, or a monetary donation.

Tips for invisible partner recruitment

Recruitment doesn't always produce the outcome you first anticipate. Taking time to identify win/win situations often yields wonderful success!

1. Ask the person if you can "keep them in the loop" by sending meeting minutes and other items of interest as they come available through the year.
2. Determine if the person has a particular interest that would motivate them to become more involved in the future, then record the information for future reference.
3. Determine if the person has a good understanding of the initiative. Offer to explain it if they don't.



Invisible Partner Recruitment

Example:

Ted, the manager of the local supermarket in NutriCity, has verbalized support of the coalition's mission, but hasn't attended a meeting in two years. Although the secretary sends him meeting agendas and minutes, there has been no response. This year, the coalition planned an activity to increase parent awareness by having the 5th Grade present a "5 - To Go" (Fruit and Vegetable) Skit and provide samples of fruit and vegetable ideas for parents, something Ted's supermarket could help provide. Ted is contacted, and he is very glad to provide fruits and vegetables for the program. After all, if children eat more fruits and vegetables, chances are parents will be purchasing them from Ted's supermarket. The coalition benefits and Ted's supermarket is given an opportunity to market its products and enhance its image in the community. Ted's supermarket was "invisible" until the skit provided an opportunity for action.

Example:

The coalition recognizes that Mary, a 6th grade teacher, has a special interest in nutrition and physical activity. Although Mary hasn't attended a single meeting, the coalition contacted her to see if she would be interested in including nutrition and physical activity education in her classroom. Mary is interested so the coalition provides resources. Mary becomes an invisible partner by furthering the goals of the coalition. She works with her students to develop a set of "television" talk and game shows to teach them about nutrition and physical activity. Mary even creates the potential for another invisible partner! She arranges for her students to present the "shows" to a daycare center, along with fruit and vegetable samples for tasting. The presentations provide an opportunity for the middle school students to practice learning skills; for the daycare children to learn about healthy eating and activity; and for the daycare operator to become an invisible partner!

Example :

Secure Bank in A. City sponsors an adult fun run/walk at the City's Fall Festival each year. Last year the coalition contacted Secure Bank to see if it would also support a children's fun run. The Bank agreed to the idea, and with the coalition's planning, the event was a success! The Bank was so pleased with the results that on its own initiative enhanced the event by offering funding for playground equipment to the school with the greatest participation in the run! The Bank is an invisible partner, except once a year during the fun run. Through its support for playground equipment, physical activity opportunities are increased all year; the community is more motivated to join in the annual event!

Making sure everyone is having a good time... sustaining participation

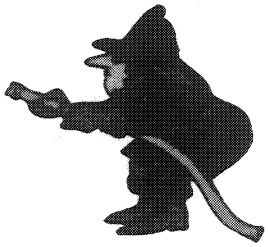
Recruitment doesn't end when the first few people start showing up. Think of this point in recruitment as the time during a party when we need to check to make sure everyone is having a good time. Follow-up is important to make sure the ***win/win*** situations are being met and don't need revising. Use the following suggestions to sustain good participation.

Tips for sustaining good partner/member participation

- Be an organized, efficient leader. Follow through with promises to members.
- Listen to ideas of new members, not just the thoughts of the established team members. Each member must feel ownership/involvement with the initiative.
- Maintain constant communication by mailing meeting minutes, agendas, feedback on action planning, and invitations to functions.
- Make an effort to initiate informal conversations. Developing feedback mechanisms can be the key to future partnering.
- Recognize contributions, regardless of effort or size.
- Offer to scale down requests for contributions or commitments.
- Make different levels of volunteer opportunities available in a variety of areas.
- Remember absences at meetings don't always signify disinterest with the coalition...people may have business obligations.
- Reciprocate support.
- Develop a buddy system between visible and invisible partners.

Be respectful that people and initiatives change, and members may need to move on, or need different levels of involvement within the initiative to keep them and **Step Up and Step Out** "fresh." Changes are just sure to happen in everyday life and aren't necessarily a reflection of dissatisfaction with the coalition.

Encountering Opposition



It is possible to encounter opposition or problems as you are recruiting. Be encouraged! Diversity and differences of opinion make life interesting! You may be surprised to find that some of your most vocal opponents become strong supporters, with time and not much effort on your part.

The following fact gathering questions are helpful for handling difficult people or situations. Once you know the answer to the question it is easier to problem-solve the solutions. You can use them to help train coalition members who may encounter barriers.

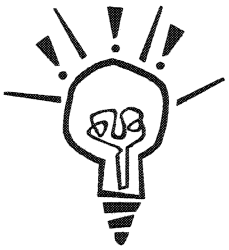
- Is the person expressing opposition adequately informed about the program or coalition?
- What barrier/opposition do they represent or what is their specific agenda?
- Is the person with an opposing view just over-committed and doesn't want to give support to anything that might create more work for them?
- What opportunities to participate have been offered to them? Has it been too much? Are lesser commitments available?
- What is their history with this community and the program? That is, have past issues such as money, politics, or personality conflicts clouded their judgment?
- Does the initiative represent a threat to them? For example, do business owners see a potential market threat in terms of reducing their revenue?

A proactive coalition will identify potential opposition before it occurs. Coalition members may be able to gain support by problem solving with those in opposition. Of course problem solving doesn't always work out on the first try, so keep your options open!

Change, Grow, and Develop

As your coalition continues to grow and develop, stay flexible with member participation and roles. The worst thing that could happen is your coalition would become so dependent on one entity and the resources they bring that they become stretched beyond their means, and "burn out." Keep the distribution load divided as equally as possible so your partners remain fresh, enthusiastic and committed for the long haul.

Coalition members who are encouraged to work in different areas of the initiative will not only experience personal growth and fulfillment, but also cultivate a deeper commitment to the vision, mission, and objectives of your initiative. These members become your strongest supporters and recruiters. Encourage and motivate them to achieve. The definition of team is: Together Everybody Achieves More!



Module Tip:

Begin now to let your community know about Step Up and Step Out. Plan a "blitz" of communication and small activities without "overspending" time or other resources, and recruit others to join the coalition. Remember that recognized community leaders don't always have time to devote to coalition activities, however they may still support the coalition without playing key roles. It is helpful to search for "unrecognized community leaders" to provide coalition leadership.

FAQs:

- **Question:** I've been on coalitions before, and it seems like we never did anything but talk about ideas. How will this be different?
  Answer: You have a good point! Things get bogged down when groups don't have a good picture of how they want their initiative to look. Begin taking specific action steps as you plan to keep things moving.
- **Question:** Can a partner be both visible and invisible?
  Answer: Yes. Depending on the partner's personal and work responsibilities at the time, a change in commitment to the coalition may be required. It is not uncommon to see a swing back and forth between the two partnership types, and your coalition should encourage both.
- **Question:** Is it better to recruit only visible partners, so we can show off the size of our coalition?
  Answer: Never discount the power or influence of an invisible partner. Your coalition needs both styles to accomplish its goals.
- **Question:** How many partners/members do we need to recruit?
  Answer: You should have at least 1 person representing each area of focus: Community, Nutrition Education, Physical Activity, and School Meals. 12-15 members is a good size.

Module Glossary:

Coalition: The team that is formed. "A joining of individuals, groups, and businesses with a shared goal of creating changes together that would be impossible independently."
Community review: A process to identify community strengths and areas for development. It provides information to make decisions about taking actions for improvement.
Invisible Partners: Partners who do not regularly attend coalition meetings but believe and support the coalition.
Member: An individual who shares a personal interest with the coalition.
Partner: An established agency, organization, or business that has interests compatible with the coalition.
Visible Partners: Partners who are active in planning and initiating coalition actions.
Win/win partnership: A partnership in which each partner, member, and the coalition benefit from the relationship.

Event Planning Tool

Example:

Following is an example of a **Step Up and Step Out** awareness activity.

Title Of Program/Project/Event: (check type of activity along with title)
☒Media ☒School ☐ Business ☒Community **"Step Up and Step Out Wave"**

Target Audience/Numbers Forecasted: (check all planned for your activity)
☒Students 125 ☒Parents 225 ☐ Teachers___ ☐ School meal director and staff ___
☒School administrators/board members 10
☒Business/community leaders/community at-large 40

Outline/Description/Objectives:
Create awareness of **Step Up and Step Out** with a "wave" during half-time at the 9/22/02 football game
1. Provide an announcement for game's broadcaster (Karen)
2. Work with cheerleading coach and cheerleaders (Karen)

Marketing Plan:
1. Contact local paper for coverage (Jim)
2. Contact local businesses to take out an ad supporting **Step Up and Step Out** on the football program (divide between Mary, Jim, and John)

Permits Or Permissions Required:
Resource Materials/Supplies/ Handouts/Food/:
Talk with Principal Shore before planning to get permission

Costs/Funding Source:
$5.00 printing costs for information sheet to be given to businesses

Manpower Needed:
Assignments made above
No other manpower needed

Space/Time/Date Requirements:
Ads to be sold by 9/10/02

Prep Time:
Estimate 3 hours each person for ad contacts
Estimate 3 hours coordinating

Alternate Plan:
None needed

Comments:
It will be a fun "kick off" and a way to get people active!

Event Planning Tool

Use this tool to plan each of the 2-4 **Step Up and Step Out** awareness events/activities in the next 6 months.

Title Of Program/Project/Event: (check type of activity along with title)
☐ Media ☐ School ☐ Business ☐ Community

Target Audience/Numbers Forecasted: (check all planned for your activity)
☐ Students ☐ Parents ☐ Teachers ☐ School meal director and staff
☐ School administrators ☐ Business/community leaders/community at-large

Outline/Description/Objectives:

Marketing Plan:

Permits Or Permissions Required:

Resource Materials/Supplies/ Handouts/Food/:

Costs/Funding Source:

Manpower Needed:

Space/Time/Date Requirements:

Prep Time:

Alternate Plan:

Comments:

Recruiting Worksheet

Use this worksheet to begin your recruiting plan. Check the following steps as you complete them.

- ❑ Potential partners/members are identified
- ❑ Appointments are made
- ❑ Win/win situations are identified

Potential partners/members	Phone number and appointment date	Win/win situation

Additional Practice Activity

Read through the following two scenarios to identify the application of positive recruiting skills and the "oops" recruiting actions.

Recruiting Scenario I: Terri Teacher

Happy City began **Step Up and Step Out** about a year ago, and a community coalition has been active for nine months. Susie Initiative Coordinator has worked diligently to get the elementary teachers involved in the initiative. Susie is an insightful person and sees opportunities readily...often more readily than those around her. Susie recognizes Terri Teacher is an innovative, enthusiastic teacher and has been leaving notes at school to involve her in the coalition, but Terri has not responded to Susie's attempts to get her involved.

Positive recruiting actions:

1. **Susie recognized Terri's skills**
2. **Susie tried to establish communication**

Terri Teacher has a family history of heart disease, tries to encourage her family to eat a healthy diet, and be physically active on a regular basis...a perfect fit for the initiative. However, Terri does not understand the school lunch program very well, and does not get along with the food service director. In fact, Terri is very vocal and outspoken regarding her negative feelings about the program. She thinks the menus are too high fat, too many convenience items are served, and that if the school lunch program is part of **Step Up and Step Out**, then she wants nothing to do with it.

Positive recruiting actions:

1. **Susie took time to learn of some of Terri's interests**
2. **Susie became aware of Terri's conflicts with food service**

Susie waits outside Terri's classroom one day, to ask why she won't be on the coalition to help make a difference for the kids. Without waiting for a response, Susie describes several projects, events, and programs that Terri could get involved with immediately. Terri gets defensive and tells Susie she wants no part of the initiative. Susie leaves feeling dejected, personally attacked, and like she must carry on the cause all by herself. Terri leaves feeling guilty for not helping out, but frustrated with Susie for asking so much of her when she is already so involved with other volunteer positions at school, and besides, doesn't Susie understand what a mess the school lunch is?

"OOPS" recruiting errors:

1. **Susie didn't ask for an appointment**
2. **Susie didn't address Terri's conflict with food service**
3. **Susie wasn't sensitive to Terri's time and other commitments**
4. **Susie should have come prepared with a win/win situation for Terri**

A better scenario:

Susie has some funding for a special project that involves recipe development, menu planning, and taste testing for the school meal program. She proposes that Terri's class participate in the project.

The class has a guest speaker from school food service explain regulations for meal planning, fat, and calories. The students are given references, ideas, and guidance to develop or identify recipes they will taste test before making recommendations to the food service director.

New recipes are incorporated over a three-month time period and during that time students do lunch room surveys and conduct plate waste studies to determine acceptance of the new recipes. The students document their findings and make additional recommendations to the food service director

After receiving the information, the food service director follows-up with the class to let them know of her final decisions regarding the new menus. She explains the YAC (Youth Advisory Council) and gets input as to how it would work for their school. She encourages them to get involved with YAC.

As for Terri Teacher, she has a much better working knowledge of the school meal program, requirements, constraints, and needs. She feels like she and her students made a difference. She is no longer negative and vocal about school meals, and she is able to participate in the initiative at a level her time permitted. Terri's creativity and motivation skills led to student enthusiasm, new recipes for the menu cycle, and support for the newly formed YAC. Terri feels good and Susie is delighted to have delegated a project and gained a new supporter.

Additional Practice Activity

Recruiting Scenario II: Barney Beef

There is a coalition meeting tonight, only the second time the group has met. Barney Beef, the manager of a local, rather large cattle feed yard, has been invited because a coalition member thought he would be a good partner. Barney is at the meeting but no explanation has been given to him as to why he is invited or his possible role in the coalition prior to the meeting.

Susie Initiative Coordinator is thrilled Barney is attending the meeting. Barney would be a great addition to the coalition—he represents big business in the area and could be involved with nutrition education for families—he could possibly help out financially—he is a leader locally, and statewide in the beef industry!

Barney arrives at the meeting thinking, "This dang school health initiative is going to try and take beef out of the school meal program, and start a 'don't eat beef campaign'. I'll attend their meeting all right! I'll tell them what's what!"

The rest of the meeting is history. It was a disaster with Barney criticizing every discussion, and Susie feeling very defensive.

Positive recruiting action:

The coalition invited a very good community partner to the meeting

"OOPS" recruiting errors:

The coalition didn't give Barney an explanation of a possible coalition role or determine his knowledge of the initiative

A better scenario:

- If we can't turn back the clock to handle the situation differently, is it still fixable? Yes, Susie needs to avoid being defensive. She needs to ask Barney to stay after the meeting to address his concerns. Barney is a good candidate for the coalition team. It is best to meet conflict head on—to compromise and work out solutions.

- Susie would spend time with coalition members prior to recruiting to review recruiting tips, including,
  1. An explanation of the purpose of the coalition.
  2. Expectations for Barney's involvement.
  3. An opportunity for the recruit to express concerns prior to attendance at a meeting.

- Susie could talk with Barney before the meeting and determine whether or not he has concerns. If she knew he felt his business was in jeopardy, she could explain that there are no good food or bad foods to dispel his fears.

- Once Susie learns of Barney's concerns, she develops a plan to create a **win/win** partnership:
  1. She arranges for Barney to provide beef to the school district at a lower cost.
  2. Barney makes reliable nutrition education resources available to the school.
  3. Barney arranges for the beef industry to provide the school lunch staff with low-fat beef recipes.
  4. The school meal staff increases student contact by having the Youth Advisory Council taste test the recipes.